1- Linton E-5 (1938-39) 1939 FTS Tanala FTS

285

mat. Mats of palm leaves are the handiment, as they are almost white with a glossy surface, but they do not wear well. Floor mats, etc., are always woven as a whole, not made from pieces sewn together, as among some other Madagascar tribes.

295 581

At least 80 per cent of the hard mats are undecorated. The commonest decoration consists of a line of broader twilling running around the mat 2 to 4 inches from its edges and parallel with them. When there is further decoration, the space inside this border is divided into a series of squares which are separated by bands of wide twilling. The twilling within each square differs from that of the adjoining squares, the various types of twilling being arranged symmetrically (Fig. 12, *d*). The designs are not named and have no special significance. They are of the simplest geometric type and there are no attempts to reproduce natural forms. At the present time a few colored mats are made, but these are a recent development and the dyes are always aniline. In many cases the colored patterns are nothing more than diagonal strips which intersect at various points, the woven designs running across them unbroken.

285 [171] [248

Soft mats are made principally by the southern Tanala, who employ them as a substitute for cloth. They are identical with those used by the southeast coast tribes and may have been introduced from that region. They are woven from various tough sedges, *harefo* and *kovana* being the best. In some localities these are cultivated in flooded beds, like rice. The leaves are very dark green, tubular, like garlic, and grow 18 inches to 2 feet high. They are harvested when the tips begin to turn yellow, rolled in powdered kaolin until thoroughly coated, then spread out on mats in the sun. When nearly dry, they are made up into bundles about 2 inches in diameter and beaten with a cylindrical wooden mallet or rice pestle until they become soft and pliable. They are never split.

The technique of weaving is the same as for the hard mats, except that the soft mats are usually woven in strips not over 18 inches wide. These are later sewn together to form blankets and garments. The best ones are made from small stems and are so closely woven that they resemble coarse canvas. They are rarely decorated. After weaving, the mat is taken to running water, kneaded and worked under water with the feet, to make it more pliable.

295 177

All Tanala basketry is of the hand-woven type.[1] Coiled basketry is unknown and its general distribution in Madagascar suggests that it was introduced from Africa in relatively recent times.

[1] The classification and the terms of Otis T. Mason, Aboriginal American Basketry, Report of U. S. National Museum, 1902.

1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FTS Tanala FTS

to become hereditary, the ablest of a deceased chief's sons being chosen to succeed him. The *Anakandriana* usually held office for life, but could be deposed for misconduct. 618

The *Anakandriana* was in no sense a king and his establishment differed little from that of other well to do natives. He seems to have had no special insignia of office and I could learn of no taboos governing his conduct or that of the other members of the gens in dealing with him. No taxes were paid to him. In some gentes he received a part of fines levied on criminals, but this was not universal. His duties were to act as arbitrator in disputes between villages and as a court of last appeal in serious criminal cases, especially those involving sentence of death. 618 693

After the Zafiakotry conquered the neighboring gentes their *Anakandriana* was recognized as a king, *Mpanake*. At first he seems to have been chosen by the gens alone, like any other *Anakandriana*. Later he was chosen by the *Anakandriana* of all the gentes, the only prerequisite for office being that he must belong to the Zafiakotry gens. Still later the royal power was strengthened and it became possible for the king to nominate his successor. The king Rainilevola had children by eight of his wives and before his death indicated the succession for twelve places. Lemangivy, a son, was designated to succeed him, then Iovana, a daughter, then Raindriamanava, a son, and after him nine other sons. The mother of Raindriamanava was of *mêva* caste, but his right to the succession was never questioned. During the reign of Queen Iovana he was the most influential man in the kingdom. He never became king because the French abolished the office. 643

I was unable to get any coherent account of the exact powers and functions of the Menabe kings, or of their regalia, or of the ceremonies performed when they were inducted into office. No two informants were in agreement on these points and apparently they had never become formalized. The kingdom was short lived and constantly subject to Imerina influences.

THE IKONGO

The political organization of the Ikongo cannot be understood without some knowledge of their history. In the earliest period their territory was occupied by many politically independent gentes which were probably similar to those of the Menabe in their organization and government. Later at least two gentes of foreign origin forced their way into the region, partly displacing the aborigines. At first 174 563

the invaders lived in compact gentile groups, but in time certa families or lineages left the gens territory and settled among t aborigines, seizing control. These small ruling groups kept touc with their parent gens for a time and relied on it for support, but the intermarried with their subjects and fused with them racially an culturally. Their descendants in the male line came to constitute noble caste with representatives in all the groups. Although the nobles claimed a common origin and were jealous of their exclu privileges they no longer considered themselves as a political uni Although they would assist each other if the commoners rose against them, they frequently fought among themselves, leading their follow ers of aboriginal stock against each other. Even in such wars the still recognized the blood bond to the extent that it was taboo for commoner to kill the enemy king, although a noble would do without hesitation (see Warfare).

Apparently there were many Ikongo villages which did not include lineages of *hova* ("noble") caste. Even when they were present the influence was not preponderant in local affairs. The village govern ment was essentially the same as the Menabe. There was an elect chief, usually not a noble, who acted as executive, and a *Fokonolo* ("council"). Each gens had a chief called the *Mpanoka* who w elected from the members of the *hova* caste. Prerequisites for t office were the same as for the Menabe *Andriandriana*. The *Mpa* noka was chosen by the village chiefs and *Notables* of the entire gro irrespective of caste, and could be deposed at will. Associated wi him were one or more officials called *Anakandriana*, who were elect on the same basis and in the same way as the *Mpanoka*, but must *of rakoka* ("common") caste. Theoretically the *Anakandriana* act as counselors and executives, but actually they often seem to ha had as much power as the *Mpanoka*, who was unable to remo them from office. The whole arrangement strongly suggested a du chieftainship.

Kingdoms arose, as among the Menabe, through one gr acquiring domination over others. The king, also called *Mpanok* was chosen from among the *hova* of the dominant group. Li the gens chiefs, he was assisted by elected *Anakandriana* whom could not dismiss. These *Anakandriana* might be chosen from a gens within the kingdom, but were always of *rakoka* caste. Usual all gentes were represented among them and they formed a sort permanent council with a sharp check on the conduct of the *Mpa noka*. They exercised executive functions and continued in offi

L. Library B-8 (1958-57) 1000 910 Tanala 910

very strong, however, for the Antaifasina say that they are unable to cure the malady and are accustomed to turn over the victims to the French medical authorities for treatment.

The ceremonial side of spirit possession is most highly developed among those tribes which show the most African influence and it seems possible that the whole idea is ultimately traceable to Africa. However, it has become thoroughly incorporated into the native culture. I never heard a non-Christian native express scepticism regarding it and even the Christians are convinced of its reality and treat it by prayer and exorcism.

Spirit possession is always intermittent. Physically it is characterized by trembling and twitching, increasing in violence until the subject begins to dance. The attack usually ends in unconsciousness and rigidity. When the subject is revived he is normal and has no memory of what has occurred. A few of the victims may be true epileptics, but in most cases they seem to suffer from nothing more than acute hysteria. A Tanala woman of the Manandriana gens told me that she might become possessed at any time or place. Her heart would begin to beat violently and everything before her eyes would become wavering and indistinct "as though she were looking through heat waves in strong sunlight." When this happened she knew that the possessing spirit was coming and would begin to dance. She had never seen or heard the spirit and this was the only way in which she was conscious of its presence. Ratsiokoba, a Tanala informant of the Zafindiamanana gens, told me that a person subject to possession would begin to tremble and twitch when he heard a drum, or a person crying, or when he felt any strong emotion, as joy at the return of a long-absent relative. All informants agreed that the malady was contagious and that if one person became possessed all those present who were subject to possession would also be attacked. I witnessed a case of this sort during a ceremony at the royal Sakalava tombs at the village of Mahabo. A woman became possessed and a man near her was seized almost immediately. As he was a person of importance all attention was centered on him and the woman recovered in a few minutes without help. Among the Imerina there was a great epidemic of possession in 1863-64, which seems to have been quite comparable to some episodes in medieval European history.

Satisfactory accounts of spirit possession and the methods for its cure were obtained from the Zafindiamanana and Manandriana gentes of the Tanala Menabe. It is known to occur with at least equal frequency among the Ikongo, but no exact information was

I- Lamm 6-6 (1820-87) 1993 916 Tanala 110

531 Curved elements of design are used much less than straight and triangular ones. All the curves used in carving are arcs of circles. No irregular curves were seen and only one spiral, the latter on an object whose Tanala origin was questionable. Crescents are used as parts of larger designs, usually in combination with circles, but are rarely the central element in a design. Circles are rarely used except as the central elements of designs. Both circles and crescents are usually concentric. Many of the circle patterns are very elaborate, with a rosette or even a many-pointed star at the center surrounded by zones of other designs (Fig. 32, b, c, e, f). Pointed ovals are made from two shallow arcs intersecting at the ends. They naturally suggest leaf forms and the resemblance is often heightened by fluting the interior. They are used rather more extensively than circles or crescents. In one instance a band of them has been carved on the edge of a stool (Fig. 33, a). Four or six of them, radiating from a common center, give a flower-like form often used as the central element in a section of design (Figs. 32, f; 34, a).

The designs built up from the motifs just described are extremely varied. No two are exact duplicates. Most of them are based on the circle, or on the square, subdivided into a number of rectangles. There is also a limited use of large triangles, with many variations in the motifs used for borders and fill. Two designs deserve especial mention as distinctive in themselves. One of these is a large rectangle with rectangular projections at all corners (Fig. 35, b). This is usually carved with a border of one pattern and a fill of another. The other consists of a circle with eight antennae which are arranged in four pairs. These antennae radiate out from the top, bottom and sides of the figure. This design appears to be ancient and has gone out of use in recent times (Fig. 34, b).

The carved designs have no religious or magical significance and the modern carvers seem to have no names for most of them. The art is inspired entirely by a love of beauty and in the old days each man carved his own belongings in his spare time. Large objects such as houses, beds, etc., might be worked on intermittently for years until the decoration was complete.

531 174 In its technique, Zafimaniry art corresponds closely to that of the Betsileo, but there are several differences in design. The Betsileo rarely if ever use the pointed oval or the floral forms based on it. They make a much more elaborate use of curved figures, including the spiral, and frequently carve outlines of men and animals. These seem to be entirely lacking in the Tanala art. In view of the existing

D. Lawson B-6 (1959-67) 1000 FOR Female FOR

similarities and the history of the Zafimaniry it seems probable that the art of both groups was once identical, but that it has diverged in relatively recent times. Betsileo wood carving is practically extinct while Zafimaniry wood carving is still very much alive. The older Zafimaniry carvings resemble the Betsileo ones much more than do the recent examples and I feel that the new work shows a simplification due to mass production. 173 179

The ultimate origin of this art cannot be determined at present. In historic times this particular style of carving was limited to the Betsileo and Zafimaniry, but with suggestions of it among the more negroid tribes to the south and west. Toward the east and north, it died out rapidly. Certain of the Betsileo designs, and the Zafimaniry circle with antennae, have an African flavor, but the zigzag carving, which is the most important technical element, can hardly be African. It rather suggests some Arab work, yet it appears to be lacking on the southeast coast, the region in which Arab influence was strongest. I know of nothing comparable among the Malays, but certain parallels can be traced between these Zafimaniry carvings and some Polynesian forms, especially the carvings from Samoa and the Cook and Austral groups. Other features of Tanala culture certainly suggest the presence of a culture as much Polynesian as Malayan and it seems possible that both the Polynesian and Zafimaniry styles of carving may be ultimately traceable to some common source.